

Eunice Kennedy Shriver's Leadership and Legacy:
Changing the World's View on the Mentally Disabled

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Junior Division

Group Exhibit

Student-composed Words: 500

Process Paper: 499

Collaboratively, our group of Shaleen, Abby, and Erin discovered Eunice Kennedy Shriver while researching possible people for this year's History Day theme, "Leadership and Legacy". We found her tragic backstory to be captivating; her passion paved the way for the mentally disabled to be viewed and treated as equals. Mrs. Kennedy Shriver was motivated by something which we could all relate: family. She created a playing field that idealized the principles we all want for ourselves and loved ones. This field became the Special Olympics, her legacy, which changed the world.

We began our research by gathering general knowledge about how Mrs. Kennedy Shriver started the Special Olympics and laid the foundation for the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Throughout the entire process, we agreed on a "divide and conquer" approach to meet the various requirements. Abby researched the Special Olympics, Erin focused on family history, and Shaleen covered Mrs. Kennedy Shriver's relationship with her sister, Rosemary Kennedy. Individually, we collected and filtered our information with Evernote, a note-writing website. Then, we collaborated and communicated with each other through Google Drive.

Halfway through our research, we decided an exhibit would suit our topic best and began the task of designing and creating one that portrayed both Eunice Kennedy Shriver's leadership and legacy. After discussing the details of our design, we created a rough sketch that captured the Special Olympics logo and also provided a layout for our information. Making adjustments as we went, our finalized plan was shown to Erin's father, an engineer, who guided us through the building of our display.

We gradually put together our display with help from Mr. Zihlman. He handled the larger, more complex machinery while explaining what he was doing along the way. Then, he

handed it off to us to cut, paint, and glue the finished product. We began to utilize our research and create our display elements. Our teacher and several advisors showed us how to weave the leadership and legacy theme throughout our project. They also familiarized us with the regulations and concept of History Day. As our work continued, we organized our information according to subtopics. Our group focused on the task of including the theme while sorting through information, writing analysis, and printing and creating the elements on our board. With guidance from Katie Craven, the State History Day director, we completed our exhibit.

Our finished exhibit relates to the National History Day theme by incorporating leadership and legacy throughout the display. Eunice Kennedy Shriver led and inspired her home and the rest of the world to change their views of the mentally disabled. Her legacy, which we dedicated an entire panel to, is not just the event she started, but it also includes her children that continue leading the Special Olympics. Also, Mrs. Kennedy Shriver's commitment to the disabled helped establish the ADA. By incorporating her leadership and legacy in both our analysis and display, we have captured this year's National History Day theme: "Leadership and Legacy".